

## The impact of a sex education program for students of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of basic education

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** This research aims to identify the needs of students of basic education on sexuality and sex education (SE) and, from these, to develop their skills in order to promote a healthy sexuality.

**Methods:** To understand the students' conceptions and needs concerned with human sexuality and SE, we developed a questionnaire for the second and the third cycle of basic education students attending an Oporto school. Questionnaire was filled in online by 397 students (192 females and 205 males). The data obtained were taken into account when developing a SE program applied to 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grade students, by the school teachers. After the program we applied a questionnaire, which was filled in on paper by 112 students (60 females and 52 males), in order to ascertain the changes occurred. Both questionnaire results were processed with SPSS statistical program.

**Results:** About 47% of the students acquired a comprehensive concept of sexuality, against the 43,1% that in the diagnoses phase only considered the biologic dimension of sexuality. The intervention students revealed more knowledge about reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, contraception, pregnancy and hygiene. Students who participated in SE activities agreed more than those in the diagnose phase that school is a place where they could clarify doubts about sexuality and that teachers were able to clarify them. These students also agreed more that they wanted to participate in more SE activities. Students who participated in the evaluation phase also considered more that SE has an important role in the children and adolescents development.

**Conclusions:** A SE intervention that considers the needs of their target audience has a greater probability of effectiveness.

**Keywords** – Sexuality, sex education, intervention, questionnaire